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Missions week focuses on God's heart

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — Knowing God intimately and having his heart for the nations should be top priorities for Southern Baptists, speakers said at the second annual International Missions Week at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay Conference Center, in North Carolina.

The July 8-13 week was a potpourri of seminar tracks, missionary testimonies, dramas, special music, and media presentations interspersed with sermons by missions leaders. The assembly drew more than 1,400 people.

The emphasis of the week was on "The Unfinished Task: Dispelling the Darkness" which will be the theme for this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, including the annual International Mission Study in churches across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Special seminar tracks throughout the week focused on training and equipping Southern Baptists in prayer, volunteer work, missionary service options, and Global Priority Churches. Special focus groups also zeroed in on select groups, such as African-Americans, missionary parents, and medical missions.

In his daily Bible studies, popular missiologist and pastor John Piper, considered one of the leading proponents of missions theology today, chal-

lenged Southern Baptists to truly satisfy God by living God-centered, holy lives that reflect his heart for the entire world.

and love God will share God's same desires, he said.

IMB President Jerry Rankin said in opening remarks, "God

regional leader for southern Africa, told participants, "The key question is, what in my life is worth dying for?"

He said the answer to that question is a passion to see every person who does not know Christ have the opportunity to embrace him.

"When I wake up in Zimbabwe every morning, my heart's desire is that the nations may know him, and that is something truly worthy dying for," Fort said.

Fort told about missionaries and nationals who have been killed because of their faith and determination to share Christ with others.

"There is something far worse than physical death — it is the person who dies without Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior," Fort said. "Why else would we send people to places like Angola, where there are more land mines than people?"

The capstone for the week was an appointment service for 57 new missionaries, many of whom will serve in locations that only a few years ago seemed impossible. The 57 included a former police officer, a widow, a former business owner, a former high school choral director, and a former Buddhist.

Also included, but totally unidentified, was a couple who will work with one of the least evangelized and most dangerous people groups in the world.



STICKY SITUATION — Two young ladies rise to the challenge of a marshmallow relay in a recreation time during International Missions Week July 8-13 at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay conference center in North Carolina. (BP photo by Jessica Webb)

"To glorify God is to magnify him," Piper said. "That's what your life is supposed to do."

Piper said, "God does not look upon sinners with delight or on something beautiful in the nations, but because there is something in God that wants the nations to have that which they do not have [God]."

Christians who truly obey

has blessed Southern Baptists [spiritually and materially] not to take pride in being a great denomination but to be instruments in his hands.

"If God has chosen to bless us — if he is blessing you and your church and your family — it is because he wants to bless the nations," Rankin said.

Gordon Fort, the board's

West to retire after two decades at Central Hills

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Didlake commended West for his years of service to Mississippi Baptists.

"I feel we have been very fortunate over these past 21 years to have had Dan's leadership at Central Hills. No one could have poured more of his life and love into a camping situation."

"His efforts helped the camp grow from a tent-camping facility into one with new lodges, and soon a new multipurpose building. In his leadership of the Royal Ambassador camp, he has had an impact on lives all across our state."

"We understand his desire to look at new, less stressful ministries, and we wish him the best as he seeks God's direction," Didlake said.

Jim Futral, MBCB executive director-treasurer, also commended West for his "outstanding contribution to the life of

Mississippi Baptists."

"For 21 years he has worked and led in helping carve tree-covered hills into an outstanding retreat center. His work has touched the lives of thousands of boys who have found a personal experience with God at Central Hills."

"Mississippi Baptists can be grateful for the solid foundation on which Central Hills Retreat can continue to grow and thrive," Futral said.

West is a graduate of Forest Hill High School in Jackson, Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg, and New Orleans Seminary.

He served as youth director of First Church, Brookhaven (1965-66); pastor of Philadelphia Church, Brookhaven (1966-68); pastor of Goodwater Church, Magee (1968-73); and as director of missions for Simpson Association (1973-77) and Pike Association (1977-79).



West

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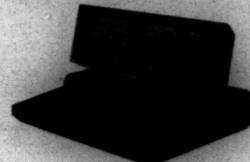
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Perkins Jr.**

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Casinos' civic spirit: look closer

Casinos in Mississippi have over the years expended a tremendous amount of effort — not to mention untold sums of money — to erect a facade of themselves as outstanding members of the local communities in which they are situated.

Very few issues of newspapers in communities with legalized gambling are absent glowing articles expounding the civic spirit of the casinos, their owners, and their employees. There are photographs of happy mayors and county supervisors accepting huge, three-foot-wide checks from friendly casino officials for any number of worthy community causes.

Casino-financed television commercials recount how much tax money is generated from gambling revenues and how scores of formerly unemployed Mississippians can now dream of owning their own home, thanks to their casino jobs.

From picking up roadside trash, to sponsoring summer events for children, to providing scholarships for Miss Mississippi contestants, the wholesomeness of the gambling industry is drummed into our psyche day after day.

The public relations pyramid scheme to raise the image of this seedy business has, for the most part, been quite successful. Just as alcohol has been reduced to just another "beverage," gambling has become simply another form of entertainment — the same as going to the movies or a stage play.

As with virtually every other aspect of legalized gambling in Mississippi, however, reality does not match the public image.

The Mississippi Gaming Commission (MGC) on July 20 fined Park Place Entertainment, parent company of the Grand Casinos in Mississippi, \$50,000 for the involvement of top company executives in Balancing the Coast's Future, a

sham group ostensibly organized to fight development in environmentally-sensitive areas of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

An investigation by The Clarion-Ledger newspaper in Jackson revealed that the main issue Balancing the Coast's Future was fighting was future construction of casinos that would compete with Park Place's properties.

Although Tom Brosig, who directs Park Place operations in Mississippi and the Mid-South, initially denied to the newspaper's reporters that he had ever heard of Balancing the Coast's Future, he was eventually forced to concede that his company was financing the group.

According to The Clarion-Ledger, Trudy Fountain, Park Place's vice-president of legal affairs, contributed around \$50,000 from Grand Casinos to help fund mass mailings and a phone bank protesting the development of rival President Casino's proposed Destination Broadwater development and another casino project called Point Cadet 2000.

To top it all off, Fountain's mother Glenda headed up Balancing the Coast's Future in the beginning, The Clarion-Ledger reported — and who later assumed the role of co-chairman of Balancing the Coast's Future? None other than Brosig himself.

Even though MGC Chairman Bill Gresham of Indianola referred to Park Place's actions as "subterfuge," Park Place attorney Tommy Shepherd of Jackson defiantly told The Clarion-Ledger, "Park Place believes its activity was in compliance with all parts of the law."

"DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE FINANCING. I'VE GOT THIS PYRAMID SCHEME!"



In other words, there was no controlling legal authority.

Obviously, this relatively minor incident is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the shady practices of Mississippi casinos. As the tentacles of this monstrous business sink deeper and deeper into our civic life in Mississippi, we can expect much worse behavior from people who feel they are obligated only to be "in compliance with the law."

Think about that the next time you see a smiling casino executive with a three-foot-wide check in his hands.

GUEST OPINION:

Reaching the world with volunteers



By Paul Harrell, director
MBCB Partnership Missions Department

Each year thousands of volunteers go on mission trips. In 1999 the International Mission Board's Volunteer Missions Department reported that approximately 120,000 volunteers participated in International Mission projects.

Mississippi Baptist volunteers accounted for over 12,000 of these volunteers — and for the first time this year, the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering includes funds to help in mobilizing mission volunteers and assisting them as we seek to confront Mississippi and our world with the Gospel.

If we are to meet the challenge of carrying the Gospel to all the world, it will require increased numbers of volunteers. The challenge of career missionaries to present the Gospel to unreached people groups necessitates that they reach out to volunteers to become a part of the strategy.

In many countries of the world a career missionary presence is not allowed. These same countries will accept professionals as teachers, engineers, architects, strategists, agriculturists, and others who voluntarily go into the country to assist in such professional areas.

As Christian volunteers respond to such needs, the Gospel can be shared through relationships, character, and

lifestyle. Bible study units are often established as a result of such ministries.

Gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering this year will play an important role in those efforts.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is currently engaged in six mission partnerships with other Baptists — Honduras (two projects), Ukraine, Maryland/Delaware, I m p a c t Northeast, and Boston. This year we began a focus on specific unreached people groups. This will provide an opportunity for missions education surrounding the assigned

unreached people group, focused prayer as churches begin established prayer support ministries, and prayer-walks into these countries related to assigned people groups.

Mississippi Baptists have been faithful across the years to respond to such mission challenges. Doing so in the future will require large numbers of mission volunteers who will make the journey to the mission fields of our world.

Financial support from the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering will be crucial in meeting those ministry needs.

In January 1998, Cindy

Jayne led a volunteer medical/dental team to Honduras. On Tuesday of that week, a mother from a village walked into the clinic with her eight-year-old daughter.

The little girl was frail and weak. She immediately attracted the attention of the medical team staff. They began to make arrangements to see this little girl. While arrangements were being made, the girl leaned into the lap of her mother and died.

How timely is God's plan that this little girl would die in the company of Christian medical people who would be able to explain to this mother the disease that had consumed this little girl's body. They were able to tell this mother that her daughter had gone to her heavenly home where no disease exists.

The team explained God's love and how he has prepared a heavenly home for all people who would trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, for their salvation. They shared how she could see her daughter again if she came to know Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior.

What a difference volunteers made in such a tragic and sad situation. Thank you, Mississippi Baptists, for supporting our volunteers by responding sacrificially to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.



IMB trustees affirm 'New Directions' policy

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (BP) — In their mid-July meeting at the Billy Graham Training Center near Asheville, N.C., International Mission Board (IMB) trustees affirmed the agency's current overseas policies, known as "New Directions," as the best way to reach the whole world with the gospel of Christ.

New Directions began in 1997 as a massive overhaul and restructuring of the board's overseas operations. It marked the first overarching plan in which the IMB has set its sights on all peoples everywhere.

In the past, large portions of the world, particularly in

Eastern Europe and Asia, were off-limits to traditional missionary activity. Attempts to reach some of these areas began in the late 1980s, but in 1997 New Directions removed all limitations.

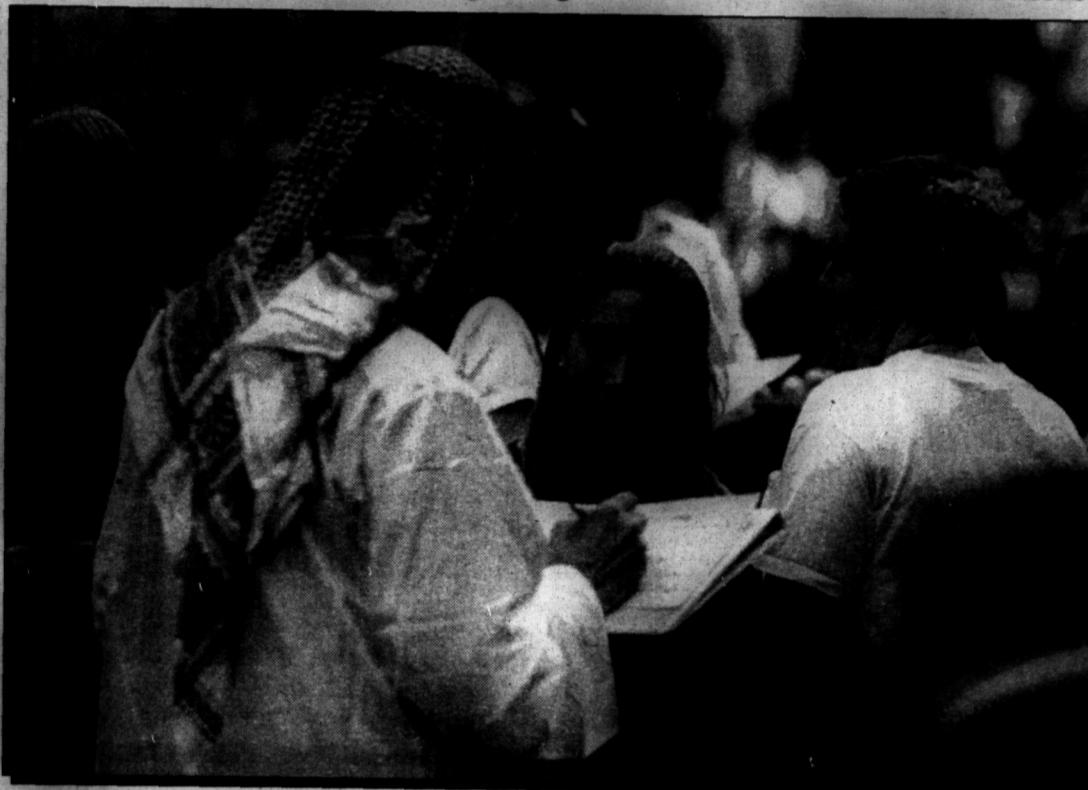
Key ingredients in New Directions include its focus on the world's people groups instead of geopolitical countries and on igniting church-planting movements instead of starting one church at a time.

Today, New Directions asks the question, "What's it going to take to reach the whole world for Christ?" This has spawned creative approaches that are moving beyond traditional missionary efforts. For instance, finding a branch of a people group living in a more open country than the rest of that people group provides opportunities to evangelize and

train those in the more open country to reach those in the more closed country.

Trustee-approved recommendations regarding New

[is to] continue to evaluate the world's needs and personnel growth and recommend changes to the organization's structure to meet those needs."



GOT IT!—Leslie Phelps of Richmond, Va., secures a missionary's autograph as part of a scavenger hunt during International Missions Week at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay conference center in North Carolina. Speakers at the July 8-13 week said knowing God intimately and having his heart for the nations should be top priorities for Southern Baptists. (BP photo by Jessica Webb)

Directions included an affirmation that "our mission is to start New Testament churches consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message. Where government policy allows and where security concerns are not prohibitive there, churches will be publicly identified as Baptist churches."

Other points in the New Directions review affirmed:

- "IMB Leadership [will] continue to emphasize church planting while exploring ways to promote discipleship and leadership training for churches that is contextually appropriate and adequate to facilitate Church Planting Movements."
- "Our primary commitment [is] to people group focus without neglecting megacities and mega-population segments."
- "The senior vice president

Trustees also requested that a committee be named to study the matter of missionary support. In an unrelated but parallel action, trustees also approved a restructuring of the staff salary policies for IMB workers in Richmond.

The trustee meeting was held in conjunction with International Missions Week at the nearby Ridgecrest Baptist conference center.

The week, which drew more than 1,400 participants, ended July 13 with an appointment service for 57 new career and associate missionaries.

During the trustee meeting, seven of the 14 regional leaders

reported on what God is doing in their regions.

Each said he sees signs of growth in the spread of the gospel in his area.

Don Dent, regional leader of Southeast Asia and Oceania, explained, "In most of my region we use the name Baptist and work with Baptist partners, but we have some places where this is not possible."

He described three situations that are exceptions to the rule:

- In one country where being identified as a Baptist would bring swift governmental reprisal.
- In another country where Baptist work is overly identified with one ethnic group, and



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THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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using the name Baptist would cause other groups to react negatively.

- In yet another country where national Baptists are considered quite liberal in their theology and do not believe faith in Jesus is the only way to salvation.



Looking back

10 years ago

A total of 39 Baptists from Northwest Association in Mississippi spend a portion of their summer vacations in Champaign, Ill., helping construct Garden Hills Church as well as assisting the local association in surveying local area needs and conducting weekend revivals in three churches.

20 years ago

The English Language Institute at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) in Hattiesburg recognizes the USM Baptist Student Union (BSU) with a certificate of appreciation for the work of the BSU's international committee with foreign students learning conversational English.

50 years ago

A first-of-its-kind billboard is erected to invite motorists to attend services at First Church, Poplarville. "The sign is so constructed that automobile lights shining on it at night bring out the letters even more brilliantly than they are in the day time," according to an article published in The Baptist Record.

HEART FOR THE WORLD
— David and Jill Reynolds of Columbus, Ga., talk about overseas missions opportunities with Don Dent, who leads International Mission Board work in the Southeast Asia and Oceania region. The couple, who are members of First Church in Opelika, Ala., was among 1,400 people who participated in International Missions Week July 8-13 at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay conference center in North Carolina. (BP photo by Jessica Webb)

2000 BF&M released

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The 2000 edition of the Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M) tract became available July 17 from LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). The tract is the edition adopted by messengers June 14 at the annual meeting of the SBC in Orlando, Fla.

Work on the statement began after messengers to the 1999 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta approved a motion calling for appointment of a committee to study the statement and to bring a report to the 2000 meeting. Subsequently, a 15-member Baptist Faith and Message Study Committee was appointed by then-SBC President Paige Patterson.

While not a binding document or creed, the Baptist Faith and Message outlines basic Baptist beliefs related to subjects such as Scripture, God, man, salvation, the church, baptism and the Lord's supper, and religious liberty. The confessional statement was first adopted by the SBC in 1925. A new edition was adopted in 1963 and amended to include an article on the family in 1998.

Copies are available at 20 cents each, a reduction in price from the previous edition, and may be ordered by calling LifeWay's Customer Service Center toll-free at (800) 458-2772.

Little-known people fill 'Hidden Treasures'

New MBCB personnel plan OK'd

The executive committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), in a called meeting July 17 at the Baptist Building in Jackson, approved a new personnel performance management system for MBCB employees that includes detailed performance evaluations and a redefinition of the salary administration plan.

MBCB executive director-treasurer Jim Futral told the executive committee that the new system, recommended by human resources consultant Phillip Blount and Associates of Atlanta, updates decades-old MBCB policy and more closely ties salaries to work performance.

The new system will take effect in January 2001.

In other business, the accounting firm of KPMG reported a "clean" annual audit of MBCB financial statements, which means the financial statements are "in conformity with generally accepted accounting procedures," according to the audit statement.

The executive committee also approved Dennis E. Salley Jr., pastor of Valley Park Church in Valley Park, as a new board member to fill the unexpired Sharkey-Issaquena Association term of Ted Porter.

The next regular executive committee and full board meetings are scheduled for August 29.

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—From a consultant and college professor to a columnist and a children's author, Mary Manz Simon has reached a lot of audiences.

This time her target is children, ages 4-8, and her subject is little-known Bible characters. Despite the huge success of the fantasy-filled Harry Potter books, Simon likes using real people with real emotions to catch a child's interest.

That's what she hopes for her children's books, "Hidden Treasures of the Old Testament" and "Hidden Treasures of the New Testament," published by Broadman & Holman Publishers.

"They should connect in a real emotional way. You can do that by either touching the heart or looking at situations which kids can relate to."

She believes her Hidden Treasures books do both.

"They are heart connectors, and they are also real. So it hits kids right where they're at—wanting a real authentic experience, but also one that touches the heart with real emotions," she explained.

The characters in her books "are real people who God takes [at] the crisis point in their lives and uses them. They're like us, they're like kids today," Simon said.

She said she's had the idea for a book about little known Bible characters for years, but only recently felt it was the right time to write it.

"I looked for the little stories that might

be only two verses about a person."

One of her favorite stories from the New Testament is the story of Rhoda. In the story, a group of Christ's followers was meeting secretly at the house of Mary, mother of James and John, to pray for Peter's safety while he was in prison. The group heard a knock on the door, which the maid, Rhoda, answered.

who's growing up, who's trying to deal with sibling rivalry and peer relationships, those kids are making a lot of mistakes and they look at Rhoda and say, 'Hey, God can even work through her. He can work through me,' Simon said.

Simon began writing children's books because she couldn't find devotional books just for her children.

"I wrote my first book, 'Little Visits with Jesus,' on McDonald's napkins in 1987, and my children weren't bored. They didn't say, 'Yuck!' to devotions."

Some of Simon's favorite characters in her new books are women — Rhoda from the New Testament and Deborah from the Old.

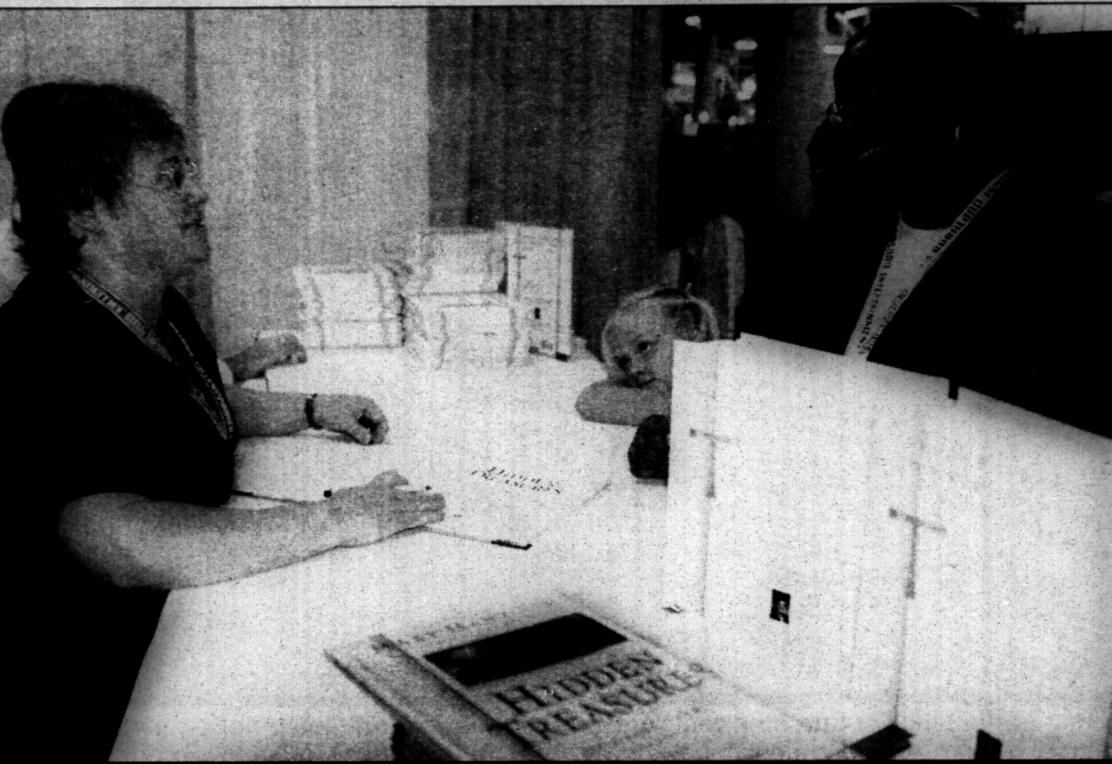
"I like Deborah because she was a very strong woman. She listened to God," she pointed out.

Other stories in Simon's books include:

- Old Testament — Michal, David's wife, who helped save her husband's life; Shiphrah and Puah, two nurses ordered to kill all baby boys, but who helped save them instead; and Rahab, who hid two of Joshua's spies.

- New Testament — Matthew, the tax collector; Eutychus, who Paul brings back to life; Jason, who helped Paul escape; and Zacharias and Elizabeth who are old yet have a son named John.

In addition to writing children's books and speaking about market trends related to children's products, Simon is a columnist for parenting magazines.



HIDDEN TREASURES FANS — Mary Manz Simon (left) signs her children's book, *Hidden Treasures from the Old Testament*, for Cherita Andrews (right) of Houston, Texas, as Christina Hanegraaff, of Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif., waits her turn. The author was at the Christian Book Sellers Association meeting in New Orleans in mid-July. (BP photo by Terri Lackey)

It was Peter, and Rhoda didn't let him in.

"Anybody, the soldiers, could have seen him, and Rhoda leaves him standing there outside," Simon said.

She said the story reminds her that even when we do silly things God can still work through us.

"We are all Rhodas at some time in our lives. We all do stupid things, and for a kid

Attacks begin to mount against Christians in India

NEW DELHI, India (BP) — Another day, another bombing. That's the impression being created, at least, by a mounting wave of attacks on Christians and churches in India.

Bombs from time bombs planted in churches have injured Christians in at least three states. Several Catholic priests have been murdered. Another was defended from a mob by his courageous landlord, a Hindu woman who fended off the attackers with boiling oil.

Indian church leaders charge that many of the attacks are a part of a campaign by Hindu extremists bent on intimidating Indian Christians and driving missionaries out of India.

Some government officials and Hindu groups counter that most cases are local quarrels exaggerated by Christians to foment hysteria — or are plots instigated by Pakistani Muslim agents to hurt India's international image. Few deny the increasing frequency of anti-Christian incidents.

The trend commanded renewed world attention early last year when Australian Baptist missionary Graham

Staines and his two young sons were burned to death in their vehicle by militant Hindus in Orissa state. Millions of average Hindus reacted with shock and expressed sympathy for the family.

Missionary Gladys Staines has expressed public forgiveness toward those who murdered her husband and sons, and she intends to stay in India. But captured suspect Dara Singh, the alleged leader of the deadly attack, has become a hero to some Hindu extremist groups.

Reported anti-Christian attacks have numbered in the dozens since the beginning of 2000, continuing a frightening growth pattern of recent years.

Police in Andhra Pradesh arrested four more members of several shadowy Muslim groups July 17. The suspects reportedly confessed to being involved in church bombings.

Bombing targets included the Gewett Memorial Baptist Church in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, where three people were injured by a blast after a morning worship service. That attack and three others occurred June 9 — the very day

Southern Baptists and other world Christians were participating in a day of prayer and fasting for the Hindus of India.

The bombings marked the sixth in a series of recent attacks on churches in Andhra Pradesh alone, according to local media dispatches.

Regardless of who's responsible for the church bombings, Christian leaders insist radical Hindu groups are behind many of the 100-plus attacks on Christians reported since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in 1998.

The BJP government's consistent downplaying or denial of organized Hindu involvement, they charge, only encourages more attacks. International human rights groups express similar concerns, noting the government's ties to radical Hindu groups.

Yet another church bombing in early July in Karnataka drew 100,000 Christians to a July 9 rally to pray and call for action. "We appeal to the government to bring under control the organizations that openly challenge our constitutional rights, spread

half-truths and untruths — and encourage criminals," said church leader Marampudi Joji at the rally.

Those organizations, according to Christians, include the Sangh Parivar ("united family"), a network of Hindu groups calling for the purification of India from non-Hindu influences — including Christianity.

Modern India's "founding fathers" — Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru — envisioned a pluralistic state, tolerant of all traditions. Two generations later, polls say a majority of Indians still favor that ideal, but radical forces preach "India for the Hindus," a land reserved for "one nation, one people, one culture." That's a volatile message in a nation that speaks countless dialects and is home to more than 100 million Muslims, 20 million Christians, and throngs of Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, and tribals.

Muslims remain by far the biggest and most despised "enemy" for Hindu extremists, but Christians, at about 2% of the population, present an easier target — and their evangelistic success infuriates the radicals.

City official putting faith first in civic life

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — She's a wife, mother, busy businesswoman, successful public servant, and president of the Jacksonville City Council. Most importantly, Ginger Soud is a woman who loves the Lord with all her heart.

That commitment to Christ led to Soud's being asked to chair the executive committee of the Jacksonville, Fla., Billy Graham Crusade. The event is set for Nov. 2-5 at Alltel Stadium.

"When I was approached and asked to pray about considering this position, I was speechless," Soud recounted. "The thought of being asked to chair the crusade was absolutely overwhelming and thrilling. To be given this opportunity has been the single greatest honor of my life."

As excited as she felt, Soud still spent much time in personal prayer, seeking God's will before making a decision. She also talked and prayed with her family: Judge A.C. Soud Jr., and three adult sons — Jeff, John, and Adrian — about the possibility.

She recognized that accepting the volunteer position to help organize events in preparation for the crusade would greatly impact her family, and that she would need to have their full moral and spiritual support to fulfill her responsibilities.

After prayerful consideration she accepted the assignment, and in that process, she and her family made commitments to the Lord and His work.

Considering her family before commit-



IN A DAY'S WORK — Ginger Soud, Jacksonville City Council president, meets with guests from Namibia, exploring prospects for importing seafood from the African nation. Pictured are (clockwise from left) are Nana Ohene Darko, vice president of international and government relations for Aviation Systems International Inc.; Leonard N. Lipumbu, ambassador to the United States, Canada, Brazil and Mexico; and Harry Frisch and Carlos Sanchez of Beaver Street Fisheries Inc. in Jacksonville. (BP photo by Shari Schubert)

ting to a task is not new to Ginger Soud. While raising her three boys, the energetic entrepreneur chose a career in real estate so she could have the flexibility needed to keep her priorities focused.

She now can say with confidence that all three of her children know Christ as their personal Savior. Jeff and Adrian are successful attorneys and John, a physician, is completing his residency in emergency medicine.

In 1993, after all three sons were successfully launched, Soud started a real estate business of her own. The next year she became the first woman ever elected to an at-large position on the Jacksonville City Council. She was re-elected in 1995

"That is truly the best part of public service."

Other aspects of serving in the political arena can be less enjoyable, but the tasks are equally important.

"A leader is called upon to make difficult decisions. It's a process," she said. "You never want to compromise the truth. Sometimes you make mistakes, but you have to have convictions and simply make the best decisions you can with all the information you have on hand at the time."

She went on to say that second-guessing yourself or doing the things you do for personal gain is not helpful.

"I constantly ask God for strength and guidance to keep my motives pure," she said.

and 1999, and became president of the council last year.

She also chairs Jacksonville's "Character Counts" steering committee and is a prime mover in promoting the campaign, which stresses basic values.

Like any decisive leader, Ginger has been through difficult times. But she still finds joy in public service.

"The best part of serving in this arena is being able to help someone," she said. "Often you'll do something to assist a person and it will seem like such a small thing to you. Then you'll find that it was a big deal for the person seeking help."

"For the most part, I find that people are very grateful for a public official's time and effort," she affirmed.

Volunteers needed for BCV peas

Volunteers are needed for the Agricultural Missions Fellowship (AMF) Pea Picking Days for the Baptist Children's Village July 27-28 at Phillipston Church near Sidon. Donated peas will be harvested and processed for the benefit of residents of the Baptist Children's Village in Jackson. AMF president Frank Prewitt of Belzoni said electric shellers and fish cookers will also be needed on those days to process the peas.

A second Pea Picking Days for the Baptist Children's Village will be held in the Greenwood area some time around the end of the first week in August as another crop of peas matures, Prewitt said. Volunteers, electric shellers, and fish cookers will also be needed on those days, he added.

For information on the first Pea Picking Days at Phillipston Church, contact Teddy Sims at (662) 453-7609, or Prewitt at (662) 247-1560. For information on the second Pea Picking Days during the first week of August, contact David Conway at (662) 453-1752.

MR. HANDYMAN

I am a "handyman." My wife probably would not agree with that assessment, but I am a "sort-of" handyman. I'm not talking about the kind of guy who gets up early on Saturday morning and has a list of things he is going to accomplish like: fixing a leaky faucet; replacing a rotting window casing; or, building a deck on the back of the house. That is not the kind of "handyman" that I am.

My gift in "handymanism" is related to listening to the radio on Saturday morning, when I have the opportunity, to the "Handyman" call-in show. It is there that I have listened and learned how to do some of those things around the house that amateurs and semi-pros attempt. I have learned a lot, and frankly I probably could do a lot of "fixer-upper" jobs around the house, though I rarely get around to that part of the handyman culture. Still, I consider myself a bonafied, knowledgeable, and able handyman.

No doubt there are some of you faithful readers who would disagree with me, and some of you would side with my wife



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

in thinking that I am not, at all, a handyman. That just shows how little you know about this specialized area of life and work. At one time I thought like some of you — that handy-men were people who did things around the house. Yet, in time I have discovered that that's not necessarily so. My new understanding came from church. I watched as some people interpreted Christianity in a new and different way. Some people believe that being a Christian is a matter of listening to presentations and understanding what needs to be done, that they become experts at it. They clearly understand the problems. They can articulate solutions. They know verses, can argue doctrine, and may even be critical of those who don't know what they know. I guess they could be called

"Handyman Christians."

The call of Jesus to follow him is not a passive endeavor. It is not an experience that can be gained from simply reading a book, attending a seminar, or even listening to a lecture. Jesus does not instruct us to simply ingest the Word of God, but rather he challenges us to implement the Word of God. The Lord said it this way, "If any man will come after me and be my disciple, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me daily." The Apostle Paul gives insight to this same truth as he writes to Timothy, and in that well-known imperative he says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman..."

Too many of us may be like the old farmer who was approached by a young man

trying to sell him the magazine, *Progressive Farmer*. The young salesman, who was spending his summer trying to sell subscriptions to the magazine, approached the farmer out in the field one summer afternoon. He began explaining to the farmer all of the wonderful features that would be his if he took *Progressive Farmer*. He would have page after page of instructions, information, and helps to become a better farmer. Politely the old farmer listened to the sales pitch and then he said to the young man, "I know more now that I do!" When it comes to the Christian life, many of us could probably echo the old farmer.

Here is the good thing about it. We can do something — this very day! We can start by living out some of those great spiritual truths that we may have learned, but neglected. Find someone with whom you can share your testimony. Express forgiveness. Show an act of kindness. Express your faith as you act on the promises of God. Live out what you have learned.

Well, I've got to run now. I've got to go fix a squeaky door!

JUST FOR THE RECORD



B. J. Griffith and Ryan Winter of Oakland Church, Walnut, participated in State Bible Drill. Pictured (from left) are Karen Barnes, leader; Griffith; Winter; and Kay Winter, leader.

Conference on the Home will be held at Grace Chapel Church, Brooklyn, Aug. 9-11. Separate sessions will be held for men and women, beginning at 7 p.m., with joint worship following, about 8 p.m. Conference leaders are Jim and Pat Brown. For more information, call (601) 582-3881.



Ground breaking at Tangipahoa Church, Summit

Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, held its GA Recognition Service on May 17. Fifteen girls participated in the service. Their leaders are Carmon Thompson, Kim Bussen, Cheryl Jones, and Mildred Brown, director. L. H. McCollough is interim pastor.

The Travelers Quartet will be in concert at Wayside Church, Vicksburg, July 30 at 6 p.m. Larry W. Haggard is pastor.



GAs of Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale

The most significant program development in Baptist churches during the last half century is senior adult ministry. Tens of thousands of mature adults are now involved.

If you would like to order a copy please send \$12.75 to:
Dr. W. Levon Moore
200 Golf Course Road
Kosciusko, MS 39090

Read the exciting story in
Like a Mighty River
by
W. Levon Moore



Cason Church, Amory, will celebrate its 55th anniversary on Sunday, Aug. 6. Sunday School will be at 10 a.m. and worship at 11 a.m. with Sammy McMillen, pastor, preaching. There will be dinner and singing in the afternoon with Living Proof and The Messengers.

Smart Discipline, a fun-filled seminar packed with ideas about discipline and self-esteem, will be held at First Church, Pearl, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., on Aug. 2. Call the church at (601) 939-4476 for more information.

New Salem Church, Liberty, will dedicate its new 2,700 square-foot fellowship hall on July 30. Sunday School will be held at 9 a.m., worship at 10 a.m., and lunch at noon followed by dedication service. Burnett Caraway, pastor, will preach the dedication service.

Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle, will host The Riders in concert on July 30 at 6 p.m. For more information, call the church at (601) 582-9428.

Ephesus Church, Forest, recently celebrated with a note burning ceremony.

"We built our new sanctuary in 1985 and anticipated having it paid for in 2001, but through the Lord's blessings we accomplished this one year ahead of time," stated Kenneth Jones, now retired pastor of



Note burning at Ephesus Church, Forest

Ephesus Church. Pictured (from left) are Truman Bell, Leroy Callahan, Kenneth Jones, Chester Robinson, and Roquel Barber. Not pictured is Mike Sharp, chairman of the deacons.



Senator Richard White of Byram was guest speaker at the June meeting of The Senior Adult J.O.Y. Club at Woodville Heights Church, Jackson. White, a member of Wynndale Church, Jackson, shared about his recent medical mission trip to Honduras. Pictured (from left) are Jim Watkins, White, and John Hollingsworth.

**Parkway
Baptist Church
Homecoming
Sunday
July 30, 2000
10 a.m.**

Special worship celebration followed by a barbecue chicken lunch.

Guest Speaker – Dr. Bill Causey

This is an invitation for all former members of Parkway to return for a great morning of celebration, worship, and fellowship.

For more information or making reservations

call: 601-924-9912

802 N. Frontage Road
Clinton, MS

Fit 4 Health Fair

heart • soul • mind • strength
A LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN WELLNESS PLAN

SATURDAY
Aug. 12th
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

LifeWay
CHRISTIAN STORES
Helping you find the Way.

(601) 977-9676 in Jackson
(662) 844-2201 in Tupelo

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

July 27, 2000

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

Women's Prayer Celebration Retreat "Beyond Belief"

Speaker: Chris Adams

Musician: Donna Lundell

Missionary Emphasis: Paula Smith

September 29-30
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
Pass Christian

Seminars:

- *Gifts from the Heart* - Debora Watts
- *Transformed Lives: Taking Women's Ministry to the Next Level* - Chris Adams
- *Sisters Who Care* - Debora Joiner
- *Launching Language Ministries* - Paula Smith
- Plus many more led by the Women of the State Visionary Team

Contact the WMU for more info: 1-800-748-1651
or, in Jackson, 968-3800

Women Reaching Women Retreat

Central Hills Baptist Retreat October 20-21

Emphasis: "Make Known the Mystery throughout Mississippi"

Praise/Worship, Seminars, Sisters sharing, praising and praying, etc.

- Statewide mentoring matchup
- Women sharing God's heart (Bring a woman with you who needs Jesus and/or bring one whom you led to Jesus.)
 - Targeting collegiate women
 - Target campus women on mission to reach the internationals on campus.

COST: \$40 (lodging, 3 meals and registration)
Deadline to register: October 13

Contact the WMU for more info: 1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson, 968-3800

Discipleship and Family Ministries Church Leadership Training

Tuesday, August 1
Main Street Baptist Church
Hattiesburg, 7-9 p.m.

Thursday, August 3
First Baptist Church
Newton, 7-9 p.m.

Friday-Saturday, August 4-5
Gulfshore North, Growing Churches
(Sponsored by Lee Association)
Calvary Baptist Church
Tupelo, Fri. 7-9 p.m., Sat. 8-11:30 a.m.
Training for North Mississippi
Call Calvary Baptist Church for info: (662)566-1700

*Call the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
for more info: 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800 (in Jackson)*

Attention: All Lads, Crusaders, & Challengers



**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 30**

**REGISTRATION
DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 22**

**Mississippi College
Grades 1-12
10 a.m.-5 p.m.
\$4 per person**

Bring your own sack lunch and drink.



*For more information, please contact
Men's Ministry Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800 (in Jackson)*

**September Sunday
School Training**
The Power to Change
The Power of Spiritual Transformation

September 8 and 9
First Baptist Church, Batesville
September 8 and 9
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
Pass Christian
September 15 and 16
First Baptist Church, Madison

A detailed listing of faculty and conferences may be found at our web site: www.mbc.org/ss.

Contact the Sunday School Department for more info:
1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson, 601-968-3800

**Professional Certification for
Ministry Assistants and
Ministry Office SkillShops**

August 15-17, 2000
Camp Garaywa, Clinton

**Professional
Certification**
Dianne Cockrell,
certified church secretary instructor for LifeWay Christian Resources, and Church Development Team, South Carolina Baptist Convention, where one of her primary responsibilities is working with ministry assistants across South Carolina.

**Ministry Office
Skillshops**
Jane Barrett,
certified church secretary instructor for LifeWay Christian Resources, and Church Administrator at Mt. Hebron Baptist Church in Elmore, Alabama, where she has been on staff for 18 years.

For more information, contact:
Kay McDonnell
Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries
Department, MBCB
1-800-748-1651 or 292-3305 or
E-mail: kmcdonnell@mbcb.org



**MEN'S MINISTRY STATE
LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

August 11-12, 2000
Central Hills Baptist Retreat
Kosciusko

Friday's Featured Speaker
Jim Futral
Executive Director-Treasurer
MBCB



Saturday's Featured Speaker
Harold Watson
Retired Missionary, Philippines



Contact the Men's Ministry Department for more information
1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson, 968-3800

FRIDAY
6:00 pm Registration
6:30 Supper
7:30 Opening Session

SATURDAY
7:00 am Breakfast
8:00 Sessions Begin

**DEADLINES
TO REGISTER:**
August 8
Cost: \$20 per person
(Includes meals and
lodging)
Each participant needs to bring
linen, sleeping bag and pillow

ARW Literacy Workshop

Adult Reading and Writing/NAMB Certification
September 14-16

Place: Pearl River Baptist Association Camp (601)798-2372

Cost: \$45 includes meals and registration fee.

Registration deadline: September 7

You must complete all class times to receive

ARW certification from NAMB.

Contact the WMU for more info: 1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson 968-3800

BIBLE Drill Clinics

**Children and Youth Bible Drill
leaders, judges and callers
training**



Six locations in Mississippi
September 11, 12 and 14, 2000
led by Don Hicks and Harvey Ellis
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board consultants

Time

7 - 9 pm, Monday, September 11
7 - 9 pm, Monday, September 11
7 - 9 pm, Tuesday, September 12
7 - 9 pm, Tuesday, September 12
7 - 9 pm, Thursday, September 14
7 - 9 pm, Thursday, September 14

Location

McNeil, Pearl River Associational Office
Greenville, Washington Associational Office
Jackson, Metro Associational Office
Tupelo, Lee Associational Office
Meridian, Lauderdale Associational Office
Columbus, Golden Triangle Associational Office

Leader

Don Hicks
Harvey Ellis
Don Hicks
Harvey Ellis
Don Hicks
Harvey Ellis

If you have any questions or need more information about these clinics,
please call Don Hicks or Harvey Ellis in the Discipleship and Family
Ministry Department at 1-800-748-1651 or
E-mail Don at dhicks@mbcb.org or Harvey at hgelis@mbcb.org

Sunday School Directors' Seminar

August 14

First Baptist Church, Greenville

August 17

First Baptist Church, Brookhaven

7-9 p.m.*

Pre-registration by August 9

featuring

Larry Garner, author of
"Five Handles for Getting a Grip on
Your Sunday School."

Larry is director of church services for the Metro Baptist Association. He has written curriculum materials and articles appearing in numerous magazines.

For more information contact:

David Wills, Sunday School Director, dwills@mcb.org
John Clendinning, General Growth Consultant, jcclendinning@mcb.org
Sunday School Department, 1-800-748-1651, or 968-3800 in Jackson

"POPS" and ME Day

PRESCHOOLERS

Age 3 (by Sept. 1, 2000) through Pre-First

September 16 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Camp Garaywa

Cost: \$5 (includes lunch)

Bring your parents, teachers, caregivers and come join us for crafts, music and time with a missionary!

Deadline to register is September 1

For info call: Debbie Sills (601)292-3320 in Jackson or 1-800-748-1651



Teaching Handbell Skills for Ringers

August 26 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

Trace Ridge BC, Ridgeland

Contact the Church Music Department for more info:
1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson 968-3800

2000 WMU TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES CHURCH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Monday, July 31

Camp Garaywa, Clinton

2:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. OR

6:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Special Seminars
for July 31 only

- Planning for an incredible WMU Church Year

Kay Cassibry

- Women Reaching Women

Page Hughes

- Woman to Woman: Preparing Yourself to Mentor

Liz McGraw

- The Missions Mosaic Menu

Kathy Burns

Tuesday, August 1

Main Street Baptist Church

Hattiesburg

7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 3

First Baptist Church, Newton

7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.



Missions Explosion "It's Out of This World"

Church-wide missions celebration

August 25-26 at Camp Garaywa

Missions Explosion Registration

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Association: _____ Church: _____

No. Registering: _____ Housing Choice: _____ Total Cost: \$ _____

Roomates (if applicable): _____

Meals Only (list meals): _____ Amt. Enclosed: \$ _____

Return to: State WMU Office, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205 by August 18

Patterson Place Lodge

(includes 3 meals)

Double: \$46.50 each

Triple: \$41.50 each

Quad: \$36.50 each

Guest House

(includes 3 meals)

\$28.50 each

Meals Only

Breakfast: \$4.50

Lunch: \$5.50

Dinner \$6.50

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S JOB CORPS

Site Coordinator Training

July 20-22

Camp Garaywa, Clinton

For registration information, contact Tammy Anderson
WMU Department, MBCB
at 1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson at 292-3323.

For info: Contact Tammy Anderson, WMU 1-800-748-1651 or 1-601-292-3323

Pray this day for...

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

When You Pray - "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Matthew 6:6-8 (NIV)

Last August, a volunteer team from Florida built a chapel for a church and sent teams to the schools in Paulo Afonso, Bahia, Brazil, to share Christ. Over 200 people made decisions, including the mayor of the city. He invited the team to return again this year. Pray that their witness will result in many decisions.

Day of Prayer for World Peace. Pray especially for the peace negotiations going on between Israel and Lebanon and other parts of the world. It seems that something is constantly hindering those efforts.

For (1) Church WMU Leadership Training; Camp Garaya (2) A partnership is being worked out between the Ghana Baptist Seminary and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Pray that their cooperative effort will bring glory to God and enhance His kingdom in Ghana.

For (1) Baptist Building Staff Planning Week (2) Sam Goins is a church planting missionary in Williamsburg, Va. Pray for the small group ministry at James City Community Church. Pray for the outreach in the community at Williamsburg.

For (1) Training WMU & Discipleship Leaders for 2001; Hattiesburg (2) Pray for the handful of Tunisian couples who are seeking to live for Christ in Tunisia.

Bruce Rector is collegiate evangelism missionary in Fairbanks, Alaska. He and his wife, Cheryl, are trying to decide whether she should help Bruce full-time in the development of a ministry with Native American students at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Pray for them as they seek God's direction.

Large government-owned public housing estates are home to most of Hong Kong's "grassroots people." Baptist representatives are ministering to this segment of the population. Pray that many open to the gospel will be found in these 40-story buildings.

A young Kui man in Thailand who is HIV-positive has given his life to Christ. Now he is fervently sharing his faith and being discipled by his local pastor. A village chief gave permission for their church to show the "Jesus" film. Pray that those who see the film will receive its message and believe in Christ.

For (1) Training WMU & Discipleship Leaders for 2001; Newton (2) Pray today for President Festus Mogae of Botswana.

Recently, a group of Christians in a restricted-access area in Southeast Asia and Oceania were detained by authorities and forced to sign a paper, recanting their faith. Please pray for these brothers and sisters who are being persecuted.

Journeymen Ashley Hendrix has completed her term of service as a teacher at Northside Christian Academy in Mexico City. Pray that God will bless her as she seeks His will for her future service.

28

For (1) IV Centrifuge; Gulfshore Assembly (2) A Billy Graham conference on world evangelism called "Amsterdam 2000" will take place in the Netherlands on July 29 through August 6. Pray for the leaders of the conference and all who attend.

29

Please pray for "John," "Daniel," and "Kelly" in Shanghai, China. These three believers worship, fellowship and study the Word together. Each is involved in discipling other believers. Pray for their daily protection from spiritual attack.

SEPTEMBER



2/87
MISS LAURA WEBB

Azcuera 297, 3100 Parana, E.R., ARGENTINA
Parents: Elvin & Janet, General Evangelism

6/84
MR. JOHN FOX

Visanai Biserica Baptist Str. SF. Nicolae 80., Beltsy 279200 MOLDOVA
Parents: Thomas & Tammy, General Evangelism

9-95
MISS EMILY HEWITT

3331 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS 39216
Parents: Earl & Mona, Medicine, SERVE IN WEST AFRICA

11-82

MISS ARIEL AUSTIN MASSEY

8711 Echo, El Paso, TX 79904
Parents: Gregor & Karen, Music Promotion, SERVE IN MIDDLE AMERICA

18-78

MISS SUMMERS DUNAWAY

WCC, P O Box 1205, Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Parents: Philip & Lara, Theological Education, SERVE IN BRAZIL

18-82

MISS APRIL SMITH

Aparado 207, Huaraz, PERU. Parents: Steve & Vidonia Smith, General Evangelism

22-87

MR. KYLE JONES

4, bis, Grande Rue, 54420 Saulxures-les-Nancy, FRANCE
Parents: Mike & Pam, General Evangelism

25-79

MR. RYAN KYZAR

Mississippi College, Box 4281, Clinton, MS 39058
Parents: Music Promotion, SERVE IN RUSSIA

25-86

MISS STEPHANIE SMITH

Apartado 207, Huaraz, PERU. Parents: Steve & Vidonia Smith, General Evangelism

27-83

MISS AMY K. LEE

52-31 Matsumidai, Ikoma-shi, 630-02, JAPAN. Parents: Henry & Linda, General Evangelism

We can help you raise money for your building program!

Challenge to Build has a 30-year history of assisting Mississippi Baptist churches reach a new level of giving, and has raised \$32,308,346 from 1990-2000.

Your church CAN reach its goal:

- Debt Retirement

- New Worship Center

- Family Life Center

- Educational Buildings

- Other Projects

A cost shared program offered by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Stewardship Department Contact Jerry Mixon, Stewardship Director, 601-292-3347 or 1-800-748-1651 ext. 347

Challenge to Build

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Ground breaking at First Church, Madison

First Church, Madison, broke ground for the construction of a new Christian Activities Center on July 2. The center will include a full-size high school basketball court, a walking track, and activity areas to be used by every age group. There will also be a commercial kitchen. John Temple is pastor. Representing the different age groups (pictured from left) are Josh Woodward, youth; Baxter Hartness, children; Terri Martin, adults; Billy Thames, senior adults; Jim Peoples, young adults; and Francesca and Wesley Wavro, preschool.

First Church, Ripley, had a note burning ceremony for its new Family Life Center on April 30. The note burning was part of dedication ceremonies held at the facility located on Pine Street. The new building, approximately 16,000 square feet, includes a gymnasium, classrooms, kitchen, and parlor area. Members of the building and finance committees include Sidney Boyd, Harold Hurt, Paul Lowry, Kenny James,

Martha Goolsby, Marnell Childers, Ray Sartor, and Bobby Martin. Albert Wilkerson is pastor.

Rickie Williams; Albert Jernigan; Dennis Griffin, and Richard Clymer.



Note burning at First Church, Ripley

Escatawpa Church, Escatawpa, will be sending a mission team to Columbia, Tenn. on Aug. 1-5. The mission team will be building a church. The volunteers that will be participating are Greg Johnston, pastor; Vicki Johnston; Eugene Hamilton; Lloyd and Debbie Oliver; James Josey; Pat and Angus White; Gary and Sheila McCory; Ben and Pepper Benjamin; Steve Goff; Faye Le Maitre; John Weaver; Rickie Dearman; Carolyn Williams; Albert Jernigan; Dennis Griffin, and Richard Clymer.

A mission team from Spring Creek Church, Philadelphia, and Walnut Church, Walnut, recently spent a week in Silverton, Colorado, conducting a VBS. Silverton Church had been closed for several



Mission team from Spring Creek Church, Philadelphia, and Walnut Church, Walnut

years but last year, a bi-vocational pastor, Mark Lawson, renewed Sunday morning and Wednesday night services. Mission team (pictured, from left) are Wayne King, pastor, Spring Creek Church; Samuel Cox, pastor, Walnut Church; Gladys King and Martha Patterson, Spring Creek Church; Bobbie Cox, Walnut Church; James Henry Patterson, Crystal Gail Watkins, and Nolan Watkins, Spring Creek Church.

Freddie Cook Jr., age 63, dies

Freddie Cook Jr., 63, died July 11 in Gulfport. Cook was employed at Camp Kittiwake, RA camp at

Pass Christian;

Mississippi

Baptist

Convention

Broad (MBCB),

Jackson; and

retired April

2,1999 from

Gulfshore

Baptist

Assembly, Pass Christian, after

37 years of service with the

MBCB. Funeral services were

held July 15 at St. Paul United

Methodist Church in Pass

Christian where he served as

church treasurer and steward.

Survivors include his wife Edith Dedeaux Cook, Pass Christian; daughters, Florence Lang, Frederica Robinson, Desiree Cook, all of Pass Christian; and Rachel Ray, Gulfport; sons, Brian Cook, Gautier; Leo Cook, Gerald Cook, and Bryce Cook, Pass Christian; brother, John Gilbert Cook, Pass Christian; and 17 grandchildren.



Cook

Celebration of Service



Retired Ministers Retreat

Co-sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Glorieta, A LifeWay Conference Center, Glorieta, New Mexico

September 25-29, 2000

For all Baptist ministerial retirees, church-related or denominational service, even those continuing in ministry and for spouses also. Afternoons are free for sightseeing, fellowship, napping, etc...

- New friends
- Quality food
- Wonderful singing
- Blissful scenery
- Friends of years past
- Refreshingly cool weather

Special Events:

- Meaningful Bible Study with BO Baker
- Motivational Worship with William M. Pinson, Jr.
- Music: Dick Baker with Bill Hanson, organ

Call **1-800-797-4222** to make your reservations.

Fall Fling Branson, Missouri

October 18-21

3 nights lodging, 3 breakfasts, 3 dinners, 1 train with lunch, 4 shows, and 1 attraction.

Total cost per person:

\$400.00

Balance due by September 10th. For more information contact First Baptist Church, Laurel at 601-649-5710.



TRAVEL WITH TOM LARRIMORE

Personally escorted by Tom.

Holy Land 10 days Dec. 27, 2000 - Jan. 5, 2001

with optional 4 days extention
cruise the Nile - Luxor and Aswan.

EXPERIENCE COUNTS!
Tom has made more
than 30 overseas trips.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Editor's note:

The Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting occurred more than a month and a half ago, and The Baptist Record has printed a large number of letters sufficient for most opinions on that subject to be expressed. When the letters currently in the queue as of July 27 are exhausted, no further letters dealing with the annual meeting will be printed.

NOT DEGRADED

Editor:

Having read Richard Green's letter (*Should Gender Matter?*) in the June 22 issue of The Baptist Record, I feel qualified to respond because I am a Southern Baptist woman. Gender does matter, because God stated so in his Word to us.

I am an educated professional, pastor's wife, and was a messenger to the 2000 Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando this past June. When the issue of women in the pastorate was presented, I along with many of my Baptist sisters cast my ballot in favor of the updated Baptist Faith and Message.

I felt in no way degraded or threatened by this statement. God has all authority to specify in his Word who can or cannot pastor his church regardless of what our current society thinks.

I am thankful to the men that God has called as our Southern Baptist pastors and husbands, and I do not envy them their jobs, responsibilities, or standing.

Mr. Green, I respectfully ask, if you have disagreement with our "beloved convention" as far back as the Civil War, why do you remain a Southern Baptist?

Tina Smithey Cooper
Ackerman

DOES GOD CALL WOMEN?

Editor:

My letter is in response to the letters of those giving their support for women preachers in the June 22 and 29 issues of The Baptist Record.

Does God call women to preach? This question is controversial and many people avoid the question by being indifferent, or go by modern opinion without searching the Scriptures.

This matter cannot be settled by opinion, observation, or logic. There is only one place to settle this question of whether or not God wants a woman to preach. That is by the Word of God itself!

1 Tim. 2:11-14 says, "Let the

Ronnie Cottingham • Music Evangelist

Remaining Available Dates for 2000:

The weeks beginning Sept. 3,
Sept. 10, Oct. 22, and Nov. 26.

Also scheduling Christmas concerts and 2001 dates!

Call today toll free 1-888-391-7760
or visit our website at:
www.ronniecottingham.com



women learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Paul did not allow any women preachers or women teachers, nor any women to have authority over men in the New Testament churches.

We know well that God does not want Christian women to remain silent outside the mixed public service because of what the Bible says about women in Titus 2:3-4, 2 Tim. 1:5, Prov. 30:17 and 6:20, and other Bible references.

Many godly women are mentioned in the New Testament. They were often as well-trained, devout, and well-instructed as the men. The Bible does not forbid women to pray, sing, or testify.

Bennett Blanton
Houston

STAND BEHIND SBC

Editor:

Sometimes when our children want to do something, and we say no, they ask, "Why not?" If we don't have time to explain then or they are so mad they aren't listening anyway, we may say simply, "Because I say so."

God may deal with us in the

same manner when we ask, "Why not?" He made us, and he made the rules by which we function best. These rules are for our benefit and our security. They don't change with the times. They don't move with the wind or shift with the political flow. They are absolutes. God could say, "Do this because I say so, and this is the way you function best." (He did say, "If you love me, keep my commandments.")

Some of these absolutes that men (and women) are trying to change today are: Honor your parents and the elderly (Ex. 20:12; 1 Tim. 5); don't divorce the wife (or husband) of your youth (Mal. 2:14-16); don't kill (or abort) your children (Lev. 18:21; Jer. 32:35); don't be homosexual (1 Cor. 6:9-10); women, be submissive to your own husband (Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1; Tit. 2:5); women, don't be pastors (1 Tim. 2:12).

I'm thankful that our convention is standing for these absolutes. Let's stand behind them instead of wanting what seems right in our own eyes.

Why? Because God says so.
Carol Davis
Shannon

BEING SELECTIVE

Editor:

I notice in your July 13 issue there were five letters supporting the SBC leaders. Twenty

years ago, I would have agreed with them. However, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, I have come to see the truth. I know that the word "prophesy" means primarily to preach or speak forth. Philip had daughters who preached. Peter says in Acts that your sons and daughters will preach. Rules are given concerning women who preach. God chose women such as Hulda to speak for him.

I could go on and on. The point is, whether or not women should preach is a matter of interpretation. People who insist on their interpretation, have placed it ahead of Jesus. Therefore, they have virtually made an idol of their interpretation.

I wonder when they will deal with what the Bible says about women braiding their hair or wearing jewelry and fine clothes? When will we start stoning or fasting or plucking out eyes which offend? Surely, we aren't going to be selective in our interpretations.

Ray A Thompson
Jackson

'OLE TIME RELIGION'

Editor:

Praise the Lord for the Christian conservatives who had the courage to stand up and vote against women being

continued on page 9

Mose Dangerfield, retired minister, dies

Mose Dangerfield of Clinton, 69, a retired minister, died of cancer July 16 at home.

Services were held July 18 at First Church, Clinton, with burial in County Line Cemetery, Kosciusko.

Dangerfield was a native of Moncks Corner, S.C. He was a graduate of Berkeley High School in Moncks Corner, the University of South Carolina, and New Orleans Seminary.

He served as minister of education and music at First Church, Frisco City, Ala.; West Jackson Church, Jackson; and First Church, Camden, S.C. He was also minister of education

at First Church, Clinton, and First Church, Biloxi.

Dangerfield served as adult consultant in the Sunday School Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), from 1977 until 1983 when he became director of the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department of the MBCB. He was a Marine veteran of the Korean War.

At the time of his death he was serving as music director of Ogden Church, Benton.

Survivors include his wife Kathleen; daughters, Judy Boggan of Crystal Springs, and Janice Dangerfield of Jackson;



Dangerfield

brother, Freddie Dangerfield, Moncks Corner, S.C.; and one grandchild, Sarah Kaitlyn Boggan.

Memorials may be made to First Church, Clinton, or Ogden Church, Benton.

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continued from page 8

pastors. It makes me sick to see a woman dressed like a man get up in the pulpit and lead in prayer, let alone preach.

Can you imagine a man getting up dressed in women's clothes preaching? God forbid!

Read Duet. 22:5 for the answer. Give me the "Ole Time Religion" any day.

Louise Odom
Jackson

GROUNDS FOR LAWSUIT

Editor:

Shortly after I graduated from Southwestern Seminary there was a job opening at a hospital in Jackson for a chaplain. When I tried to apply I found there was a prerequisite requirement of pastoring a church. This kept all female seminary graduates from being able to apply for the position. I am glad the Southern Baptist Convention finally put their position in writing. It will make it easier in the future for female seminary graduates to win a lawsuit against hospitals.

Rhonda Farrior
Meridian

STICK TO THE WORD

Editor:

I am a child of God, saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and a pastor's wife for 40 years. I am a Southern Baptist by choice, and I applaud our Southern Baptist Convention for its recent stand on women pastors. It appears we have many pastors or overseers in our conventions who only believe parts of the Bible, God's inspired Word. It is time that pastors get off the fence and either stand for the Lord, or sit down and keep quiet before the devil destroys the churches and conventions.

We have come to a time that I never dreamed I would see in

my lifetime, when only parts of the Bible are believed true and the rest is disregarded. It amazes me how anyone could interpret Scripture to mean that women are to be ordained as pastors of a local church. There are many areas in local churches, conventions, and mission fields where women can serve. In fact, if it wasn't for many dedicated women in these places of service, God's work would be left undone! Why should we let the women's liberation movement in the world become a guide for the local church?

It is my prayer that our churches, conventions, and mission boards will stick to the inspired Word of God and quit adding to or taking away that which isn't ours to add to or take away.

Martha J. Harris
Mt. Olive

END DISTRACTIONS

Editor:

Another Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting is history and like most others for the past 20 years, the outcome was less than positive. No matter which side of the issues one believes, the controversy has been distracting from our main mission of sharing the Gospel. Letters to the editor pour in supporting all views. Meanwhile, the rift grows wider.

Only a handful (comparatively) of Mississippi Baptists attend the convention, but what happens there does affect us significantly. Despite an unopposed platform for convincing messengers and others that their views are "of God," the SBC leadership quickly takes to the media after each action to explain what "the Bible says" about a wide variety of agenda issues. Meanwhile, the rest of us do our best to downplay the distraction and remain true to our calling.

Admirably, our Mississippi Baptist Convention leadership

has done its best to keep us out of the fracas and focused on our true mission. However, with an amazing lack of Mississippi Baptist representation in the SBC leadership — including absence on the committee which wrote the new Baptist Faith and Message — how can we help but be significantly distracted?

Maybe it's time for Mississippi Baptists to study the response of other state conventions like Texas in order to get us beyond the politics and back into the battle against the true enemy: Satan. The time for our distraction needs to come to an end!

John J. McGraw
Ellisville

BIRTHDAY PLANNED

Editor:

Gore Springs Church in Grenada County is planning a 45th birthday celebration October 22. We are trying to get locations and addresses of former members, pastors, and families in order to mail an invitation to them. If you know the whereabouts of any of the family members of deceased pastors listed below, please send information to P.O. Box 29, Gore Springs, MS 38929-0029: Lynton B. Cooper; J.A. McCain; and H.S. Rogers.

Peggy Gillon
Gore Springs

OBSERVE ANNIVERSARIES

Editor:

At the recent meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Society in Savannah, Georgia, the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission (MBHC) was commended for the support provided Mississippi Baptist Convention churches in celebrating significant anniversaries.

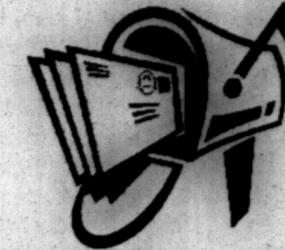
In 2000, there are 43 Mississippi churches eligible to celebrate significant anniversaries. Of those, 29 have celebrated or scheduled special occasions to mark this significant milestone. Of these, 12 are celebrating 100 years, five are celebrating 125 years, 10 are celebrating 150 years, one is celebrating 175 years, and one is celebrating 200 years, making a total of 3700 years of service to God and mankind.

MBHC prepares a documentary record of church activities for the anniversary churches

from extant sources in the library. The celebrants find the Historical Highlights very helpful, according to feedback we receive from them.

If other churches have celebrations planned, please notify the Commission office and we will assist in any practical way. The anniversary celebration is an ideal time to reflect on what has been accomplished by the committed members in years past.

Edward McMillan, exec. sec.
Miss. Bapt. Historical Comm.
Clinton



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



THANKS FOR SUPPORT

Editor:

Since our church burned on Jan. 17 I have been overwhelmed by the love and support shown us from so many directions. Immediately after the fire, Charles A. Finane offered the full use of the facilities of the Wright and Ferguson Funeral Home in Raymond.

Wynndale Church has given us beautiful pews. Van Winkle Church opened their hearts to us and have given us so much as they made their move to their new location. Hinds Community College (HCC), Raymond, opened many of their facilities to us and the BSU near the HCC campus allowed the use of their facilities for Sunday School and Children's Church. Other churches and individuals have given love offerings and we are very thankful to each one of you.

The week of June 14-17, several churches came together to begin to help us frame up the building. Don Hardin, pastor of Kolola Springs Church, Caledonia, led this group of over 30 men. The other churches were New Salem Church and Caledonia Church, Caledonia; Community Church, Columbus; and Alta Woods Church, Jackson. Most of the framing was done but it could not be completed because of the weather. Thanks to all of you men who gave so much!

To be able to thank everyone in Metro Association and the Baptist Building would be impossible!

We still need much help with framing, sheetrocking, etc. If there are any other churches which may need a good summer or fall mission project, please call me at (601) 885-2002.

Jerry E. File, pastor
Palestine Church
Raymond

YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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PIANIST NEEDED at Kreole Avenue Baptist Church, Moss Point. Call 228-475-1306.

CHILDHOOD MINISTRIES DIRECTOR NEEDED. Please send resume to Morrison Heights Baptist Church, 201 Morrison Drive, Clinton 39056 or fax to 601-924-5622, Attn: Jennifer.

SMALL CHURCH IN SOUTH MS SEEKS PASTOR. Send resume to: Neely Baptist Church, P.O. Box 304, Neely, MS 39491.

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REVIVAL DATES

Bethesda, Crawford: July 30-Aug. 4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Charles Whitney, Caledonia, evangelist; Pam Tomlinson and Gypsy Gray, music; James R. Hutcherson, pastor.

Springfield, Natchez: July 26-30; 50th anniversary; Wed.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., worship, 11 a.m., and noon meal; speakers are Marvin Cobb, Wed.; Michael Townsend, Thurs.; Glenn Mullens, Fri.; Ralph Marshall, Sat.; and Barry Wilkinson, Sunday morning; Ivy Butler, music; Gene Rowland, pastor.

Thorn Hill, Pelahatchie: July 30-Aug. 2; 7 p.m.; Glen Allen, Richland, will hold the services; Bobby Tagert, interim pastor.

Providence, Meadville: July 30-Aug. 4; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Bob Lynch, evangelist; Clay Campbell, music; Ken McLemore, pastor.

First, Lauderdale: July 30-Aug. 2; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. each night; James Young, evangelist; Jerry Bishop, pastor.

Siloam (Golden Triangle): July 30-Aug. 4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. with lunch at noon; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Al Gaspard, Houston, evangelist; Ray Walker, Pontotoc, music evangelist; Walter Simmons, pastor.

First Church of Sharon (Jones): July 30-Aug. 2; David Grumbach, Petal, evangelist; Bobby Sanderson, Columbus, music; Bob Sanderson, interim pastor.

Sardis, Morton: Aug. 7-11; 7:30 p.m.; Timothy Robertson, evangelist; Tim Canterbury, music; John C. Purvis, pastor.

Providence, Grenada: Aug. 6-11; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Robert Clark, evangelist; Don Montgomery, music; Harvey Springer, pastor.

Oak Vale (Lawrence): July 30-Aug. 4; Sunday, 11 a.m. followed by lunch with a concert by Steve Walker, Pinola, at 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Clay Chancelor, Stonewall, evangelist; Steve Walker, music; Randy Gardner, pastor.

First, Lake: July 30-Aug. 2; Sunday 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; Jerry Barlow, New Orleans Seminary, evangelist; Brad and Joy Johnson, Brookhaven, music; Ken McLemore, pastor.

Unity, Georgetown: Aug. 3-9; 7 p.m.; praise and worship service will be held to kick off the revival on Sunday night, July 31; Calvin and Renae Odom and Eugene Simms will lead the music for the service; Jerome McLendon, message; A meal will be served following the service.

Antioch (Itawamba): Aug. 6-10; 7 p.m.; Charlie Cooper, Rienzi, evangelist; Clyde Robbins, music; James Rutledge, pastor.

Furrs, Pontotoc: Aug. 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. each night; Lee Gardner, evangelist; Joe Herndon, interim pastor.

Shiloh, Big Creek: July 30-Aug. 2; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Mon.-Wed.; Johnny Hearn, pastor, speaker; Charles Brasher, Big Creek, music.

Concord, Yazoo City: Aug. 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. followed by covered-dish meal in fellowship hall and 1:30 p.m. service; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; John D. Hendrix, Clinton, evangelist; Major McDaniel, Clinton, music; James F. Yates, pastor.

New Hope (Webster): Aug. 6-9; services will be held each day at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Billy Lee Foley, New Albany, evangelist; Larry Bratton, Calhoun City, music; Brattons will give a concert Sunday at 6:15 p.m.; Bernette Fielder, pastor.

Little Bahala (Lincoln): Aug. 13-16; Sunday, homecoming, 10:50 a.m., lunch, and afternoon singing with Roland and Erma Jean Ross; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Dale Authement, evangelist; Tom and Willa Moak, music; Eric Naquin, pastor.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

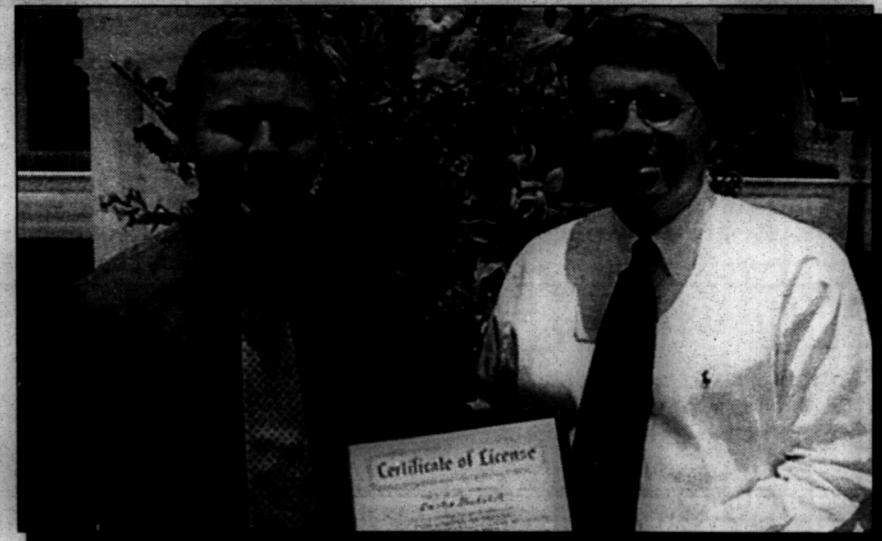
Mount Vernon Church, Lauderdale Association: recently held deacon ordination for Ken Merrell and William Nelson. Pictured (from left) are Scott Culpepper, pastor; Nelson; Merrell; and Bobby Beasley, chairman of deacons.



Culpepper, Nelson, Merrell, and Beasley

First Church, Picayune, licensed Dustin Stockstill to the ministry on July 9. Stockstill is a graduate of William Carey College and is currently serving as associate BSU director of Pearl River Community College and interim minister to students at First Church, Richton. Pictured (from left) are Stockstill and Bill Hardin, pastor.

Good Hope Church, Purvis, ordained Larry Geiger, Sonny Williford, and Blake Barnes as deacons, June 18. Pictured (from left) are John E. Watts, pastor; Geiger; Williford; and Barnes.



Stockstill and Hardin



Watts, Geiger, Williford, and Barnes

CWJC to hold training

Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) of Central Mississippi is offering a service opportunity for women who care enough about others to invest themselves in relationships. CWJC Mentor Training will be held Aug. 18-19 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton. The entire training will include two three-hour sessions beginning on Friday at 6 p.m., and Saturday at 9 a.m.

Anyone interested in becoming a CWJC mentor, or to register for CWJC Mentor Training, should contact Donna Foster at (601) 924-4323 or Sandra Nash at (601) 924-9205.

For more information about CWJC, contact Tammy Anderson, WMU Department at (601) 292-3323 or (800) 748-1651, ext. 323.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

I read your recent response to the woman who felt that her pastor made a pass at her during counseling. I feel you may not have been completely on target in your answer. I have been responsible for developing a program to deal with such problems, and I think you failed to consider a third option — that the pastor was innocent. Most pastors are very cautious about situations such as you described. However, I do agree that it might be for the best for the lady to "move on." Most pastors in that situation keep a door open to the church secretary's office or bring in a second party. I would also like to suggest that an article might be run in The Baptist Record giving "how to" information for churches.

Thank you for your suggestions.

tions. In my mentioning the vulnerable situation the woman was encountering, I meant to imply that the pastor could be innocent. I also agree that a "how to" article — or a seminar — would be appropriate for churches and others. In today's world it is essential that we be as "wise as serpents and gentle as doves" (Matt. 10:16).

The "love light" in our marriage went out long ago. I have to beg my husband to take me out for dinner or a movie. How can we reignite the spark?

Start by determining when the light went out. Think about the good times: what was happening, and what were you

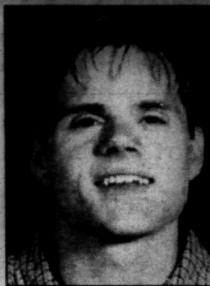
doing that made you happy in your marriage? It may seem simplistic, but commit to do those things again for at least 21 days — which studies show is the length of time it takes to make or break a habit. Talk with your pastor or Christian counselor about attending a marriage enrichment seminar. Stay active in Sunday School and church. Be ready for resistance from your husband, and maybe even anger. Don't be a doormat, but do fulfill the biblical responsibility of a wife. Pray for your marriage. He will probably not meet you halfway for a while, but when he starts to come around, positively acknowledge his conduct. Be an affirming and encourager — and be patient.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. In central Mississippi, Ron Mumbower can be heard from 9-10 a.m. each Wednesday on WHJT-FM 93.5. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

LIFE AND WORK

What's right and what's wrong?

Ps. 9:7-8; 19:7-11; Ez. 18:1-4, 19-20; Rom. 2:14-15



By Matt Loving

Scripture testifies to the timeless fact that all people will be judged by God according to what they have chosen to do with their lives in accordance with his principles and standards. As the Holy Creator, he rightfully and lovingly demands that all persons follow his way.

No one can win favor with God or even live up to his moral standards within themselves. Following God's way means completely abandoning yourself to God through faith in Christ and allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to work in

your life. This alone provides meaning to life, assures us of a clear conscience, and enables us to avoid God's judgement.

Oswald Chambers wrote that "God nowhere holds a man responsible for having inherited the disposition of sin any more than he is held responsible for being born.... God holds each one responsible for not allowing Jesus Christ to deliver him from the wrong disposition when he sees that that is what He came to do. A man gets the seal of condemnation when he sees the light and prefers the darkness" (*Conformed To His Image*, pg.

14-15). God's standards apply to all people. They are best for us, and God holds us accountable.

God's standards apply to all people (Ps. 9:7-8; Rom. 2:14-15). These scriptures reveal that God has established a right and just way and will judge people based on his standard.

Furthermore, we find that God has created within all people a sense of moral responsibility (conscience bears witness) and by what is "written on their hearts" even when they do not have the law of God's Word. Unbelievers can merely let their consciences be their guide in moral matters.

However, by the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit, the life of a person who has placed their faith in God through Jesus will be in line with God's standard. The conscience merely gives witness to the fact that there is a standard set by God.



Loving

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Wrath vs. blessing

Revelation 15:1-16:21

By Tommy Bufkin

The storm tore through the small southern town ripping apart a subdivision. When it was over most of the homes were gone, torn apart by the ferocity of the winds. Amazingly, some homes stood intact while there was destruction all around. Sometimes it is hard to understand why some suffer and others do not. It seems capricious like the storm. The wicked seem to prosper and the righteous suffer.

One day there will be justice. The wicked will be judged and face the wrath of God. Believers must warn the guilty of this coming judgment.

God's wrath is certain (15:1).

There have already been two series of judgments on men. Now John sees seven angels with seven more plagues (literally, strokes or blows). God's wrath is his reaction to man's sin. These last judgments would deal with the problem of sin conclusively. The number seven indicates completeness. God's judgment will be complete. None will escape.

God's judgments are just (16:2-7). These bowl judgments are similar to the ones in earlier visions but are much more severe. There is a similarity to the plagues that God sent upon Egypt before the Exodus. The first bowl judgment is like the plague of boils. Just as the boils

were limited to the Egyptians in that day, these sores would be limited to those who serve the beast and are marked by him.

The second and third judgments affect all the water sources on earth. Just as in the plagues of Egypt the water becomes blood and is unfit to drink or sustain life. Every living creature in the sea is killed. This is absolute, complete destruction different from the partial destruction of the earlier judgments. This indicates the finality of God's judgment.

Two angels testify that God's judgments are just and righteous. The wicked have shed the blood of the righteous. Now they must pay for their deeds. The cry from the altar, from heaven, is the same. God's judgments are an expression of his righteousness.

God judges the unrepentant

God's standards are best for us (Ps. 19:7-11). This passage describes the awesomeness of God, his standard for all people, and the abundant life experienced by those who live as he intends.

God's perfect law revives the soul, is trustworthy, makes the most simple-minded wise, gives joy to the heart, and light to the eyes. God's design is that we grab hold of him and let go of ourselves not only in spiritual matters but also in the everyday practical matters of life.

If you are an unbeliever, all the tires on your car, so to speak, are flat because of sin. Only Jesus initially and daily can fix the problem and enable you to experience the quality of life as God intended. If you are a believer and have let even the slightest "pebble" of sin gash your life, you are like a car with one flat tire. Both are rendered useless from their full potential as designed by the Maker. The Creator alone can fix

the problem.

God holds us accountable (Ez. 18:1-4; 19-20). Within this text is the bold proclamation that all people are individually accountable to God. No one can blame anyone else or any other factors for their moral failures. Ultimately, each person will answer to God for themselves. This truth should cause you to consider your ways and encourage you to draw near to God, for he will draw near to you and guide you in his ways.

C.S. Lewis wrote that "it is after you have realised that you have broken the law that there is a real Moral Law, and a Power behind the law, and that you have broken that law and put yourself wrong with that Power — it is after all this, and not a moment sooner, that Christianity begins to talk. When you know you are sick, you will listen to the doctor." (*Mere Christianity*, pg. 38-39).

Loving is minister of youth at Oak Hill Church, Poplarville.

evil are gathering for war, Jesus Christ will come unexpectedly. Believers are urged to be watchful and be prepared. Garments often speak of the righteousness of the believer. In the conflict with the world the church is to be watchful and holy.

Armageddon could mean "mountain of Megiddo" which would refer to Mt. Carmel which has at its foot the plains of Megiddo. This plain was the scene of many battles in ancient times. Many Bible students believe that it will be on this plain that the final climatic battle in Revelation will occur. However, other Bible students feel that this final battle will be a spiritual one and not literal.

The last bowl is poured out into the air. Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air." He is attacked in his sphere of power. This is the final judgment and the whole world is thrown into chaos.

Bufkin is pastor of Mt. Zion Church, Rankin Association.

warns the Ephesians that the armor would not be effective without prayer. Believers should always watch and pray. "A Christian must 'pray always' because he is always subject to temptations and attacks of the devil" (Wiersbe, p. 172).

Paul never hesitated to ask believers to pray for him. Even while shackled to a Roman soldier, Paul asked them to pray for his ability to proclaim the Gospel and to continue to be a witness (vv. 19-20). The "fight from victory" can only be accomplished through prayer. In Be Rich, Wiersbe interprets Paul's directives for prayer in five principles:

1. Pray always.
2. Pray with all prayer (every kind of prayer).
3. Pray with your eyes open-watching.
4. Persevere in prayer.
5. Pray for all the saints (pp. 172-174).

West is a member of Calvary Church, Newton.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Provisions for believers: Armor

Ephesians 6:10-24

By Juanita West

Paul admonished the Ephesian Christians to turn to the Lord to gain strength for daily battles. In his study Be Rich, Wiersbe says, "We do not fight for victory — we fight from victory" (p. 164). The victory already belongs to Christians because of the power that comes through God.

Contest defined (vv. 10-13). Paul reminds believers of their struggles against principalities and the rulers of the darkness of this age (v. 12). He uses imagery of a Roman soldier's uniform to help believers understand the protection they have against the onslaught of the enemy. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand



West

against the wiles of the devil" (v. 11).

Kevin Meador states four reasons why Christians need the armor of God: "because you are in war; because God calls you to stand firm in this war; because the fierceness of your enemy makes it a necessity; and because you are powerless on your own" (*The Armor of God*, June 1999, pp. 2-3). The armor of God is the equipment believers need to stand firm against all of Satan's daily onslaughts.

Character described (vv. 14-17). According to Paul, the first piece of a Christian's equipment is the girded belt of truth. "The girdle holds the other part of the armor together, and truth is the integrating force in the life of the

victorious Christian" (Wiersbe, p. 167). The girdle is followed by the protective breastplate of righteousness, which represents the "practical, righteous character and deeds of believers" (v. 14, Notes, NKJ).

A Roman soldier wore hard-soled shoes, which gave him needed support in keeping his footing in battle, and enabled him to stand firm. To stand firm in battle, believers must "shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (v. 15). Since believers have the peace that comes from knowing God as Savior and knowing the truth of his Word, we can stand firm in the battles of life.

In his "Armor of God" study, Meador states: "The peace of God enables you to stand regardless of the circumstances that you face. It empowers you to overcome the attack of Satan" (p. 7). The shield of faith protects

the believers from these attacks. "The assaults of Satan cannot penetrate to the believer who places his or her faith in God" (v. 16, Notes, NKJ).

The last two pieces of a Christian's armor are "the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (v. 17). The helmet refers to God's complete control of the mind. "When God controls the mind, Satan cannot lead the believer astray" (Wiersbe, p. 169). Yet, Satan constantly tries to penetrate the Spirit with his lies and slanders.

In order to fight the enemy, the believer has to pull out his sword — specific passages of truth — which help defeat the deceiver. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

Communication directed (vv. 18-20). In these verses, Paul

ARM ministry seeking new director

The Appalachian Regional Ministry (ARM), a consortium of eleven state Baptist conventions serving more than 16 million people in 10 states, is seeking a director/coordinator to lead the ministry in addressing the physical and spiritual needs of people groups living in the Appalachian region of the U.S. Those states with Southern Baptist work that are cooperating through ARM include: Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. The ARM director-coordinator will be based in Scott Depot, W.V. Resumes should be sent to Larry Kirk, Tennessee Baptist Convention, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024.

Layman's unique job: managing synagogue

LIBERTY, Mo. (BP) — Until a year ago, Richard Groves never had set foot inside a synagogue. Now he manages one.

Groves, a member of Second Church in Liberty, Mo., is executive director of Congregation Beth Shalom in Kansas City. For a synagogue of 1,100 families, he oversees a \$2 million budget, supervises 22 people and oversees the congregation's cemetery.

"My work is essentially not a religious job at all," Groves said. "I just happen to serve a religious congregation. It's like working anywhere, except my employers' precepts are prayer, study, and good works."

He is the first non-Jewish executive director for this congregation, senior Rabbi Alan Cohen said. "It is very unusual for a non-Jewish person to serve as an administrator who works with a synagogue," Cohen said. "Rich has a willingness to understand and be familiar with our concepts."

What has made it work — whether being an administrator of a Jewish institution or Baptist institution or any denomination — is the fundamental principles of decency and respect for human beings. And that's something that crosses all lines — race, religion, or gender."

Groves started working in the synagogue in a temporary capacity in April 1999. After a couple of months, the congregation president asked him if he would like to be considered for the permanent position.

"I immediately sensed how my background could be of use," Groves said. Both his church background — chairman of deacons, church council, committees — and his three decades in corporate management would be helpful.

"I had a comfort level with Jewish people," he said. "One of my best friends in graduate school was Jewish, and I once lived in an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood

Congregation Beth Shalom, Groves said, he has come to a greater appreciation of his own Christian heritage by learning more about the faith history he has in common with Jews.

For example, he regularly hears the rabbi offer a *d'var-torah*, or devotional. "It certainly enriches my life. I have found so much in the Jewish faith that reinforces the things I have learned. I am challenged to be more of a Bible student."

Groves said he looks for situations in which Christians and Jews can interact. This past April, he offered to help organize a Passover dinner in Second Church.

In the Jewish tradition, a Passover dinner celebrates the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Rabbi Cohen provided items and found synagogue members to assist. About 200 Baptists attended the abbreviated version of the dinner on Palm Sunday night.

"The people at Second Church want to do it again,"

Groves said. "It was so successful because the people here [at Beth Shalom] are so good at coaching and encouraging." Groves and his wife, Mavis, also attended a Passover dinner in Rabbi Cohen's home. It lasted from about 7 p.m. to midnight. Groves said he has attended a few of the synagogue's special events, but generally, "I'm in church on Sunday and on my bike on Saturdays." He often rides his bike 20 or 30 miles in a day.

A native of Liberty, Groves is a graduate of William Jewell College and Washington University, St. Louis. He and Mavis have two grown sons, Jason and Jordan.



CHALLENGING JOB — Richard Groves (right), a member of Second Church in Liberty, Mo., is the first non-Jewish executive director of Congregation Beth Shalom in Kansas City. He is with senior Rabbi Alan Cohen. (BP photo by Stacey Hamby)

in Connecticut. I had been to Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon during college when I attended Baptist Youth World Alliance. I've been to the Wailing Wall, the Temple site, and Nazareth.

"So, professionally, I had experience; personally, I was comfortable with Jewish people; and religiously, I had an opportunity to learn and potentially to be a bridge between Christianity as I know it and Judaism as experienced here [at Beth Shalom]."

He was named to the permanent position in July 1999. During the past year at

Child kidnapper finds Jesus from victim's witness

Bibliocipher

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ZOIAZR, ZOIACR, A YUR
MEPT RTM, OJVOWP U
VTIE TN HLOUP NUCC
AEPT PLO SITMEQ UEQ
QAO, AP UDAQOPL
UCTEO: DMP AN AP QAO,
AP DIAESOPL NTIPL
GMVL NIMAP.

FTLE PHOCZO: PHOEPR-
NTMI

Clue: N = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Ten: Thirty-Four.

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Christopher Carrier's journey to Christ and into the ministry began as he stepped off a school bus in 1974. Until then, the 10-year-old boy had been living an ideal life in suburban Miami, Fla.

The next stop in Carrier's journey was a place some people might consider too traumatic to recall, but Carrier doesn't mind returning to that place and taking those who hear his story with him.

"I never turn down an opportunity to tell what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for me," Carrier said.

In 1974, Carrier was being raised in a church-going home by Christian parents.

"I was what people traditionally call a good young Christian boy," Carrier said, "but I was doing it in the motions and not in my heart."

Carrier's life changed forever five days before Christmas Day 1974. As Carrier hopped off the school bus, a stranger approached him claiming to be a friend of Carrier's father. The man said he wanted to buy a gift for Carrier's father. Carrier went along with the man, climbing aboard a motor home parked up the street.

Their journey didn't end at a local store. Instead, the motor home found its way into a remote area of open fields. The man stopped driving and claimed to be lost. He asked Carrier to look at a map and help them find their way back to town.

It was then that Carrier felt sharp pains in his back. He looked back to see the stranger glaring at him and holding an ice pick. During a struggle the man stabbed Carrier a few more times, then stopped.

The stranger got back behind the wheel and began driving down Interstate 75. The man kept muttering about Carrier's father and how he had caused him trouble. The man turned down a dirt road and stopped again. Carrier got out of the motor home, and moments later the stranger shot him in the left temple and left him for dead in the alligator-infested Florida Everglades.

Carrier was missing for 6 days, lying seemingly lifeless in the Everglades. A passing driver eventually found him on the side of the road the day after Christmas. The shot to the head had left him blind in his left eye.

Carrier was never able to identify his attacker. Police had a list of suspects, but without a posi-

tive identification from Carrier, they could not make an arrest.

"In any darkness or around any shadows, I was very fearful," Carrier said. "I just had no peace at all, so my parents encouraged me to get into church activities with my friends."

One of those activities was a hayride. Carrier responded to the invitation given at the end of the night and accepted Jesus.

"I was just overwhelmed with emotions and feelings, because I knew I had never really accepted and personally met the Savior," said Carrier, who was then 13. "It was at that point I understood that miracles could be done again just like we read in the Bible, so I knew I could begin trusting the Lord in all that I did."

Carrier continued growing in the Lord as he graduated from high school and went to Mercer College in Georgia. He then felt the call to youth ministry, and he knew Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, was where he needed to go to prepare.

After graduating from Southwestern in 1994, Carrier returned to Florida with his family where he served as youth minister at a church in his hometown of Coral Gables.

In 1996 Carrier got a call from a detective who had worked his case more than 20 years earlier. A feeble man living in a Miami nursing home had confessed to attacking Carrier.

The stranger from two decades ago was named David McAllister — a suspect in the case all along.

Carrier went to the nursing home and found a mere shell of the man he remembered. Blind and frail, McAllister, then 77, was motionless as Carrier approached him.

"This was a man who was hard and callused, but he started to smile and he was in good spirits," Carrier said. "We saw the Lord restore life to a man and make him new."

Carrier continued to share how the Lord had worked in his life since the attack. One Sunday morning Carrier asked McAllister the most important question.

"I asked him if he wanted to know the Lord," Carrier said.

McAllister accepted Christ that morning. Shortly after coming to the Lord and after 3 and 1/2 weeks of almost daily visits from Carrier, McAllister died in his sleep.

"I can't wait to see him again someday," Carrier said.